Tuesday, January 20, 2015

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Pot without the munchies

...and the celebrity behind the idea. Page 13

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

John Tory's token promise

Transit. Mayor breaks pledge not to raise fares; feeds 'starved' TTC; wins allies at city hall

LUKE SIMCOE
luke.simcoe@metronews.ca

It took John Tory only six weeks to break his first promise to Toronto voters, but the mayor's flip-flop on transit fares appears to have won over some of his critics.

Tory had promised to freeze TTC fares during his first year in office, but the mayor reversed course on Monday, announcing a 10-cent increase for tokens, taking them from $2.70 to $2.80. Provided the plan receives council's approval, the cost of a monthly Metropass will rise to $141.50.

The fare hike is expected to bring in an estimated $43 million this year.

"We have starved our transit system to the breaking point, and we need to take action," Tory said. "We simply cannot freeze fares and have a functioning transit system in the city."

Tory tempered the news by announcing additional funding for the TTC — to the tune of $38 million — as well as a plan to allow children younger than 12 to ride the rocket for free starting March 1.

"I've got to give him credit. He's made a prudent decision," said Coun. James Pasternak, who had spoken out against the planned fare freeze. "It's good for our fiscal health, it's good for young families, and it's good for the TTC."

Pasternak said the move to free trips for children will result in savings elsewhere. The Toronto District School Board, for example, will no longer need to buy roughly $2.5 million in TTC tickets for students.

Coun. Paula Fletcher would prefer to see money raised through additional property taxes as opposed to a fare hike, but called Tory's announcement "good news."

"I think things are always more complicated than they seem," she said. "He's measured it and thought about it, and I don't have a big problem with him changing his mind."

Tory's about-face didn't sit well with everyone.

Former mayor Rob Ford accused Tory of being "disingenuous," while transit advocacy group TTCriders said the fare increase will disproportionately affect lower-income riders.

"That group of people is having to foot the bill for TTC operations," TTCriders chair Brenda Thompson said.

Coun. Shelley Carroll, who sits on the TTC board, praised Tory for admitting the transit situation needs to be addressed immediately.

"This system came pretty close to being broken the last few years by flat-lining it and, in fact, cutting the operating subsidy. We know we need to grow the operating budget as the riders keep materializing," she said.

Carroll said she would be less supportive if the city budget wasn't also asking for a property tax increase and an inflationary increase in some recreation and user fees from non-transit-riding residents. "But that's not going to be the case," she said.

WITH FILES FROM TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

How your money will be spent

Between a fare increase and budget boost, the TTC will receive an additional $80 million this year. Here's how some of that cash will be spent:

- Restoring bus service that was cut during the Ford administration in 2011
- Adding proof-of-payment and all-door boarding to every streetcar route
- Four new express bus routes
- Expanded night bus service
- Additional subway trains on Lines 1 and 2 during rush hour
- 50 new buses, as well as a temporary storage facility

CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Kids ride free

How the proposed increase will impact all fare types:

- Cash: stays at $3; $2 for seniors and students (tickets go up to $1.95 from $1.85)
- Token: $2.80 from $2.70
- Three tokens: $8.40 from $8.10
- Seven tokens: $19.60 from $18.90
- Adult Metropass: $141.50 from $133.75
- Metropass Discount Plan (MDP): $129.75 from $122.50
- Student/senior MDP: $102.75 from $98
- Student/senior pass: $112 from $108
- Post-secondary student pass: $112 from $108
- Day pass: $11.50 from $11*
- Children under 12 ride free
- Downtown Express sticker: $40 from $38.50

* The day pass is still under discussion because it's normally meant as a family fare that includes children, and since children would be riding free, the TTC is still analyzing how that pass would work.

Who are your typical TTC riders? A survey says they are employed, ride daily at off-peak hours and are probably richer than you think. Story, page 3.

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into

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Mary Walsh

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*Regular long distance and text message charges apply.

NEWS

Forum Research poll

Mississaugans have doubts about transit plan

Only one-third of Mississauga residents believe the city can afford $3.8 billion for a planned LRT and additional rapid transit that Mayor Bonnie Crombie promised during the 2014 election campaign, according to a new poll.

The poll by Forum Research asked 845 Mississauga voters if the city could afford $3.8 billion for new rapid transit, including the light rail line. Forty-five per cent respondents said they approve of Crombie's transit plan, which includes 100 kilometres of rapid transit coverage using new and existing routes. But 34 per cent think the city can afford it, while 42 per cent believe the city can't afford it and 24 per cent don't know. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Brampton

Voters back charges against Fennell: Poll

A new poll shows that seven out of 10 voters in Brampton believe former mayor Susan Fennell should be charged with municipal fraud for her role in last year's spending scandal.

With an investigation by the Ontario Provincial Police into council spending still underway, Forum Research polled 843 Brampton residents on Thursday. A whopping 70 per cent of respondents believe Fennell should be charged with municipal fraud. Seventeen per cent disagree and 13 per cent of respondents had no opinion. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TDSB's director of education gets pay cut

The Toronto District School Board's director of education Donna Quan, right, at an emergency meeting Monday night at the TDSB headquarters, accepted a pay cut ordered by the province.
"I am very well paid, I concede that and I recognize that the public sees that," Quan told reporters after the meeting, where trustees voted to accept directives from Education Minister Liz Sandals. Sandals' directives include lowering Quan's salary from $289,000 to $272,000 for it to comply with wage freeze legislation.
STEVE RUSSELL/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Portrait of a TTC rider

Transit. Survey finds average TTC rider is employed, rides daily during off-peak hours, and probably richer than you think

She's 25 to 54 years old, employed, rides off-peak hours to work and makes a surprising amount of money.

The typical TTC rider fits the public transit stereotype in many ways except for one: instead of being middle-class or working poor, her family brings in more than $85,000 a year.

Thanks to telephone polling carried out in every quarter for the past 2-1/2 years, the TTC now has a handle on who rides the rocket and why.

"The stereotype of who uses transit simply isn't true," said TTC spokesman Chris Upfold.

About four of every seven riders are women (57 per cent) and 66 per cent are employed. The majority of riders are aged 25-54 (55 per cent), while only 16 per cent are under 25 and 29 per cent are 55-plus.

Only seven per cent of passengers are unemployed or stay at home, while 13 per cent are students and an equal proportion are retirees.

These numbers seem to indicate that the cost of bringing in free or subsidized passes for unemployed people would be reasonable, but Upfold points out that seven per cent of the $1.2 billion the TTC takes in in fares every year is still $84 million.

Twenty-six per cent of riders have household incomes above $85,000, a larger percentage than any other single income group among those willing to divulge their bracket (26 per cent of respondents declined to answer the income question).

A full 68 per cent take the subway, 47 per cent the bus and 34 per cent the streetcar. Most people ride between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. (37 per cent), while 21 per cent ride before 9:30 a.m., and 27 per cent in the evening rush, 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.

More people ride transit daily (42 per cent) or several times a week (34 per cent) than just once a week (12 per cent) or less often (12 per cent).

Almost half use tokens (45 per cent), while 26 per cent use a Metropass and 13 per cent use cash.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

In detail

The TTC polls 1,000 people by phone every quarter, and bases statistics on the total sample over time, which now tops 8,000 people, said Upfold. The organization hopes to use the information to better identify its customers' needs.

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City can't set demolition date: Councillor

Development. Provincial rules dictate when buildings come down, as in the case of Stollerys at Yonge and Bloor, says Kristyn Wong-Tam

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD
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Great Gulf is building condos on the east side of Bloor and Yonge streets, while crews demolish the Stollerys building on the west side of the intersection. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

Critics of the surprise demolition of Stollerys should file their complaints with the Ontario government, one Toronto city councillor says.

Kristyn Wong-Tam took aim Monday at provincial legislation that sets the rules for how and when buildings come down, saying it puts downtown streetscapes at risk of having gaping holes.

Under the Building Code Act, residential developers need to submit plans for what they'll build in place of an old structure before being granted a demolition permit. Commercial developers don't have to meet the same standard. Wong-Tam wants to change that.

"One-hundred-and-ten per cent I want to see that done for commercial properties," she said.

Developer Sam Mizrahi, who owns the Stollerys property, was granted a demolition permit Friday for 1 Bloor St. W., one of the city's most prominent intersections.

The next day, Mizrahi started tearing the building down, a move that surprised heritage advocates and one that Wong-Tam called "hasty."

She said conversations with the developer have yielded few specifics about what he plans. Mizrahi, who was unavailable for comment Monday, has said the development will include condos and retail space.

"I've not seen any renderings, I've not met their architect, they've not submitted anything to the city," Wong-Tam said.

Across the street, at 1 Bloor St. E., there was a lifeless streetscape hole for more than three years after the financial crisis crippled the originally planned condo project.

Great Gulf bought the property and broke ground in the summer of 2011. Construction is ongoing.

The Stollerys demolition will leave a gap for at least a year, Wong-Tam argued.

Council is expecting to field a report in coming months on how it could strengthen municipal powers over issuing demolition permits for properties not identified in the heritage inventory — like Stollerys.

The report is also expected to include protocol for notifying councillors and the public when a demolition permit is issued.

Wong-Tam rejected criticism that the city could have moved faster to make Stollerys a heritage site and avoid the demolition.

The address is part of an ongoing study of Bloor Street that aims to designate the stretch from College Street to Davenport Road as a heritage area, she noted.

Quoted

"We want to prevent properties from being randomly demolished across this city."
Coun. Kristyn Wong-Tam

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New app pitches digital solution to illegal parking

Traffic. TowIt allows users to post photos of potential offenders

With Mayor John Tory declaring traffic congestion Public Enemy No. 1, a local app developer has been inspired to help. Michael McArthur, along with business partner Gregory Meloche and a small group of developers, has created TowIt, which harnesses crowdsourcing to point out illegally parked cars to the authorities.

"It was just kind of a harebrained thought that we decided to roll with it, and the more we did, the bigger it seems to get," said McArthur. "I read an article that my old boss posted on Facebook, with him commenting something along the lines of, 'Every time I see one of those paper shredders parked on a busy street I wonder why it is not being towed,' and the idea just hit me."

The real meat of the development happened over the past week two weeks, with TowIt launching Friday on the Google Play store, and versions coming soon to iOS, BlackBerry and Windows Phone.

When app users see a parking offender, they can take a photo of the vehicle, including the licence plate, which is then uploaded onto TowIt's website; if parking authorities are monitoring the site, they can act. McArthur says he was inspired by people already doing this online, often hashtagged with "parking shaming."

Since the app launched on Friday evening, people have already started to upload pictures of alleged parking offenders from the weekend.

McArthur says he has met with the some of the mayor's staff, and has also reached out to Traffic Services, who have contacted him to discuss the app.

"I am offering the police a free solution, with no cost to them and no cost to the taxpayers, that is just going to make them more efficient, which in turn will save them or make them more money, so I can't understand why they would say no to such a thing unless they are against innovation."

Const. Clinton Stibbe, media officer for Toronto Traffic Services, says they are looking at the app. He does voice concerns, however, mostly surrounding the fact that most citizens don't know the intricacies of parking bylaws. As well, any photo of a car would require some proof of violation, like surrounding signage. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

TowIt founders Michael McArthur, right, and Gregory Meloche at King and John streets. McArthur says he's met with some of the mayor's staff to discuss the app. MARTA IWANEK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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T.O. group raising money for Peshawar families

A Toronto group is raising money to help survivors of a December terror attack at a Pakistani school that left 150 people dead.

The Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals of Toronto raised more than $10,000 during a weekend fundraiser and is intent on making the effort for Peshawar ongoing.

More than 300 people attended the event in Mississauga, including Counsel General of Pakistan Shafiq Quadri.

"We want to make sure that we don't forget these families because the support they need isn't for just two weeks or a month," said Farheen Khan, president of the Toronto council.

"Our initiative will go on over the course of the year."

Dr. Zulfiqar Bhutta, a native of Peshawar and president of the International Pediatric Association, is co-ordinating international efforts to aid survivors and will help channel money to appropriate uses, Khan said.

Donations to the effort can be made online by visiting campdine4peshawar.eventbrite.ca.

GILBERT NGABO/METRO

Council for the Advancement of Muslim Professionals of Toronto president Farheen Khan. DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ex-mayor's cancer fight

Ford begins next round of treatment

Former Toronto mayor Rob Ford is about to begin the next step in his fight against cancer.

Ford will now undergo 27 straight days of radiation to attack a tumour in his abdomen. He said last month that five rounds of chemotherapy have managed to shrink the size of the mass from 13 centimetres to about six centimetres.

Ford was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of abdominal cancer in mid-September and dropped his bid for mayoral re-election shortly afterwards. Instead, he ran for a seat on city council and was voted in during the Oct. 27 municipal election. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Police. Strip search audit finds no misconduct

It is an issue that has dogged the Toronto Police Service: when is it appropriate to conduct a strip search — and how frequently can you employ an important police tool that the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled is inherently degrading?

Following criticism Toronto officers too frequently approve and conduct strip searches — 2013 figures showed they occurred in more than one-third of all arrests — the Toronto Police Services Board called on Chief Bill Blair last May to conduct a random spot check of all police divisions to monitor officers' use of the search.

In his report, which Blair will present to the board Wednesday, the chief outlines the findings of a two-month probe of so-called "level 3" searches, which involve removing some or all of a person's clothing.

Conducted by the Toronto Police Audit and Quality Assurance section, the review examined 175 strip searches between June 15 and Aug. 15, 2014, finding each one was "justified and lawful and no misconduct was found," Blair writes in the report.

The Toronto Police Accountability Coalition — which has long called for tighter regulation of strip searches — is urging the board not to drop the issue after the mostly glowing review, noting not everyone has "such a high opinion."

The coalition has asked to speak at Wednesday's meeting about the review.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Better streets are road to good health: Report

Infrastructure. Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly roads mean lower rates of obesity and diabetes, improved mental health

JESSICA SMITH CROSS
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A woman rides a bicycle along a sidewalk at Bay and King streets during a snowfall in early January. The Healthy Streets reports suggest we would be better off if she had a bike lane to ride on. ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Narrowing a roadway to make room for a bike lane or a traffic-calming measure ... well, says the chairman of the Board of Health, "That's a war, that's a tough, tough fight."

At its meeting Monday, the Toronto Board of Health received three in-depth reports on how better street infrastructure — bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, lower speed limits, attractive pedestrian-friendly tree-lined walkways, lighting and street furniture — make Torontonians healthier, because it encourages us to get out of our cars.

The reports summarized decades of studying the link pedestrian and cycling-friendly infrastructure has with better health outcomes, including lower rates of obesity and diabetes, and improved mental health.

But, the changes require concessions from the road: narrower or fewer lanes, that impeed speeding and make room for bicycles, broader sidewalks and attractive public spaces.

At the meeting, the Healthy Streets reports were lauded by several councillors, two university professors who have devoted their careers to the issue, and walking and cycling activists. However, the reports aren't going to lead to the city spending money to facilitate changes to its streets any time soon.

Quoted

"Getting those lanes down from 3.3 metres and perhaps 2.7 metres, that's war."
Coun. Joe Mihevic

They are meant to contribute to a report on "Complete Streets" that isn't expected until Dec. 2015, or sometime in 2016. That plan is meant to shift the rules that govern how city councillors and city engineers make decisions when it comes time to resurface roads in their wards: instead of rebuilding them in the same way, more of the budget should be allotted for pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

"You have the planning department on board, you now have Public Health on board, this is how bureaucracies move," said chairman of the Board of Health, Coun. Joe Mihevic.

But, there are some who are ideologically opposed to doing anything that could be perceived as a war on the car.

"Getting those lanes down from 3.3 metres and perhaps 2.7 metres, that's war," said Mihevic. "To have narrowings at intersections, so that pedestrians have an easier time. That's a war, that's a tough fight."

Mihevic, explained that these things take time, saying it is "transformative change," in that it would shift the priorities for the many millions the city spends on street restructuring.

The change would be most drastic in Toronto's in suburbs, where there is little in the way of healthy streets infrastructure today.

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Nairobi

Kenyan police tear gas schoolchildren

Kenyan police Monday tear-gassed schoolchildren demonstrating against the removal of their school's playground, which has been allegedly grabbed by a powerful politician, said a Kenyan human rights activist. The students from Langata Road Primary School were in the front line of people pulling down a wall erected around the playground which has been acquired by a private developer said to be a powerful politician, said Boniface Mwangi. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'No intervention'

Prosecutor who accused Argentine president dies

Argentina's government said there was no indication that anybody else was involved in the death of a prosecutor who had accused President Cristina Fernandez of shielding Iranian suspects in the nation's deadliest terror attack.

Alberto Nisman, who had been investigating the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, was found in his apartment Sunday. Prosecutor Viviana Fein said the autopsy found "no intervention." But, Fein said she wouldn't rule out the possibility that Nisman was "induced" to suicide because the gun wasn't his. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shelly MacInnis-Wynn, left, wife of Constable David Wynn, and Wynn's sister, Dawn Siphon, give an update on his condition in Edmonton, Alta., on Monday. Const. Wynn was shot in the head at close range and is not expected to regain consciousness. JASON FRANSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

He will be in a better place: Mountie's wife

RCMP. Family of wounded officer have begun to say goodbye

The wife of an RCMP officer shot in the head at a casino north of Edmonton broke down Monday as she spoke of saying goodbye to her gravely injured husband.

"We're saying our goodbyes today and then from there, he'll be in a better place," Shelly MacInnis-Wynn said at an evening news conference.

"Today's the day we say goodbye to Dave."

Const. David Wynn has been in hospital since he was gunned down early Saturday morning and was not expected to survive.

The 42-year-old father of three was one of two officers shot at the Apex Casino in St. Albert as they investigated a stolen pickup truck.

The other officer, auxiliary Const. Derek Bond, was shot in the arm and torso and faces a long recovery.

The family's statement came as court and parole board documents revealed the violent criminal background of the shooter, who was found dead in a home not far from the scene.

The documents show that Shawn Rehn, 34, had a long history of assaults, weapons convictions, break-ins and drug use that stretched back to his teenage years in the mid 1990s.

"You are a dangerous person who has demonstrated blatant disregard toward the criminal justice system as well as lack of respect to the public in general," the Parole Board of Canada said when it denied Shawn Rehn day parole in 2006.

Six years later, before Rehn left jail on statutory release on different charges, the board said that his "reintegration potential is assessed as low."

He was rearrested in July 2013 with a fellow parolee who had convictions for armed robbery. Police searched Rehn's car and found a crack pipe, pellet pistol and knives.

The parole board rebuked Rehn for ignoring bans on having firearms. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dalhousie. Student not treated fairly, lawyer says

A member of a Facebook group accused of posting hateful comments about female members of Dalhousie University's dentistry school blew the whistle on the classmates who made the remarks but has been treated unfairly by the school, the man's lawyer said Monday.

Bruce MacIntosh is representing Ryan Millet, a fourth-year dentistry student and one of the 13 members of the now defunct Class of DDS 2015 Gentlemen on Facebook group.

MacIntosh said in a statement provided to The Canadian Press that Millet took a stand against posts he deemed offensive and encouraged other group members to remove them, but was sanctioned by Dalhousie University soon after the comments came to light in December.

"Like his 12 classmates, Ryan has been publicly pilloried and secretly convicted, without due process or the right to be heard," MacIntosh said.

"He is neither hateful nor disrespectful towards his female classmates. … He was the one who blew the whistle on those comments." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Facebook

Lawyer Bruce MacIntosh says that his client Ryan Millet, a father of three young children, took a "vocal stand" against misogynistic posts. He said he forced the removal of some posts he found disrespectful. MacIntosh said his client also informed a woman in the posts about them and faculty was notified.

Canada in Iraq. Troops return fire at combatants

Canadian soldiers opened fire on enemy positions in Iraq over the last week in what a senior officer called an act of self-defence.

Brig.-Gen. Michael Rouleau, commander of special operations command, says the soldiers were visiting front-line positions with Iraqi forces when they came under mortar and machine-gun fire.

The Canadians, whose job is to train and advise the Iraqi military in their battle against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, were at the front to help plan an Iraqi operation.

Rouleau says the Canadians used sniper fire and "neutralized" the enemy positions without taking any casualties.

The general says that while Canadian soldiers are not participating in active combat in Iraq, they do have the right to fire back if fired upon.

He says most of their effort involves training Iraqi soldiers in battlefield skills ranging from medical assistance to mortar fire. THE CANADIAN PRESS

RICK MERCER REPORT
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Wealth gap. Richest 1% pulling far ahead: Oxfam

The richest one per cent of the population will own more than half the world's wealth by 2016, Oxfam International said in a report released as the World Economic Forum begins in Davos, Switzerland.

Oxfam said the world's richest people saw their share of wealth jump to 48 per cent last year from 44 per cent in 2009. The world's biggest companies are lobbying the U.S. and European Union for beneficial tax changes at a time when average taxpayers are still paying the bill for the financial crisis, Oxfam said.

The charity is calling for a crackdown on tax avoidance by corporations and rich people. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Executive in nut rage case pleads not guilty

Aviation safety. Cho Hyun-ah in custody since Dec. 30, faces up to 15 years in prison

The former Korean Air executive famous for an inflight tantrum over macadamia nuts pleaded not guilty Monday to violating aviation safety law and hindering a government investigation.

Lawyers for Cho Hyun-ah did not dispute the major elements of the prosecutor's account of events on Dec. 5 when Cho forced a Korean Air jet to return to the gate. Instead, they are focusing on a technical rebuttal.

Prosecutors accused her of forcing a flight to change its route, which was the most serious charge, with a maximum prison sentence of 10 years. The three other charges Cho faces are the use of violence against flight crew, hindering a government probe and forcing the flight's purser off the plane.

Cho Hyun-ah, the former Korean Air executive who made headlines after an inflight tantrum over macadamia nuts. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Cho's attorney Yu Seung-nam told a panel of three judges that the flight had moved only 17 metres from the gate at New York's John F. Kennedy airport before it returned, which did not amount to a forced change of an aviation route.

Cho admitted using violence against one flight attendant in first class by pushing her shoulder and throwing an object at her, but denied that she poked the hands of chief flight attendant Park Chang-jin with a book. Yu argued that those acts did not amount to threatening safety on the flight.

Cho spent most of the first day of her trial Monday with her head lowered and hair covering her face.

Two other defendants also pleaded not guilty. Korean Air executive Yeo Woon-jin was charged with interfering with the government investigation and a transport ministry official was charged with leaking secrets about the investigation. Prosecutors highlighted an email showing that Yeo had asked a Korean Air customer service executive to help prevent legal action against Cho by giving special treatment to the first-class passenger who sat near her. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Employment

German telecom vet to head Rogers consumer division

Rogers Communications Inc. is hiring Dirk Woessner, a senior executive of Germany's largest telecommunications company, Deutsche Telecom, to be president of the company's consumer business unit.

At Rogers, Woessner will be responsible for product development and sales operations. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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VOICES

SMARTTRACK NEEDS SOME RELIEF

If John Tory's plan delays the Relief Line — meant to ease congestion on the Yonge subway — the future of Toronto transit will be a claustrophobic one

YOUR RIDE
Glyn Bowerman

Mayor John Tory's executive committee will get a first real look at the cornerstone of his election campaign on Thursday.

With a month to prepare, City Manager Joe Pennachetti has released an interim checklist, a working plan for the implementation of SmartTrack. The report offers a glimpse of what is required to get the project underway — some of it is encouraging; the rest might give us pause.

The real potential red flag in the report is buried in the appendices, where it says "SmartTrack may delay the timing of the Relief Line."

SmartTrack may be feasible, lure people out of their cars, improve congestion and provide transit to underserved areas of the city, but if it delays the Relief Line — meant to ease congestion on the Yonge subway — the future of Toronto transit is a claustrophobic one.

The Relief Line is identified as a priority project by both the TTC and regional transit agency Metrolinx. Throughout the election, city officials stressed the new subway is necessary, whatever else the city and region decide to build.

Another bottleneck will be the stretch of SmartTrack that would extend along Eglinton Avenue to Mississauga. Much of SmartTrack would utilize the existing Kitchener and Stouffville/Lakeshore East rail corridors. The Eglinton West portion is just an idea, to date, and requires substantial public consultation and $1.65 million in studies.

In other words, expect delays. But it's not all doom and gloom.

Toronto can take heart in the seemingly full co-operation and coherence between provincial and municipal governments, the TTC and Metrolinx, something that was missing during the previous administration.

Plus, much of SmartTrack's breakneck seven-year timeline relies on using existing environmental assessments already finished or under way, all done in service of Metrolinx's Regional Express Rail (RER) plan.

Central to both RER and SmartTrack is the electrification of the GO network, something Metrolinx cautiously concedes is possible in 10 years. GO and TTC will also test fare integration, another important piece of SmartTrack, with a pilot project this year.

Put simply, moving ahead with SmartTrack will mean some good and some not so good. You can expect to hear about plenty of both in the coming months.

While the plan may sail through Tory's handpicked executive, there's bound to be a dust up in council next month with some hard questions about the project's effect on other transit priorities.

Glyn Bowerman is a Toronto-based journalist and theatre artist. He is also a regular contributor to Spacing Magazine. Follow him on twitter @Banquos_Banquet

Smart what?

- SmartTrack is Mayor John Tory's proposal to expand GO rail and provide frequent service to the far-flung corners of our metropolis, with stations from Mississauga to Markham.
- It's all expected to happen for a cool $8 billion.

Mayor John Tory started laying the basis for SmartTrack long before taking office. This draft explaining the plan was front and centre at an election debate last year. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Introducing Your Ride

Metro is proud to introduce Your Ride, a weekly transit column about how you get around town - be it by transit, bike, car or foot.

- **Do you have a transit idea?** Shoot us an email at toronto@metronews.ca.

We're surpassing the limits of our planetary boundaries — it's really time Canada goes green

STEPHANIE ORFORD
readers@metronews.ca

It sounds like the opening of a disaster movie: Humans have broken four of the planet's nine planetary boundaries and a new era of potentially devastating climate change has begun.

Sadly, it's not. This was a sobering finding published last Thursday by climate scientists in the journal Science.

The researchers investigated nine key environmental factors or "planetary boundaries." Each has an upper limit beyond which climate effects are unpredictable and potentially dangerous for human civilization as we know it.

According to the study, since industrialization in the early 20th century, human activities have broken the boundaries when it comes to levels of extinction, deforestation, atmospheric carbon dioxide, and nitrogen and phosphorous pollution from fertilizer. Lake Erie's "dead zone," an area choked up with algae, is the direct result of fertilizer runoff.

As Canadians, we tend to see ourselves as pretty green. Public opinion in Canada has shifted in favour of all things environmentally friendly.

Canadians actively seek out "green" products, services and lifestyles. Environmentalism is no longer for fringe groups.

It's the default.

But as a supposedly progressive, developed country, Canada has been embarrassingly, shockingly unresponsive to climate change reform. A report released in 2013 ranked Canada 55 out of 58 in its efforts to rein in greenhouse gas emissions.

The economy is not an excuse. With dramatically low worldwide oil prices threatening a traditional keystone of Canada's economy, there's no better time to diversify into renewable energy and other green innovations. Clean, energy-efficient technologies such as solar panels are plunging in cost and rocketing in efficiency, making them ripe to take off with consumers as they reach parity with more polluting technologies.

Humanity has had it real good for the past 11,700 years, an epoch known as the Holocene period. Civilizations sprouted spontaneously across the world and got busy at breakneck speed, in geological terms, developing agriculture, organized societies, science — civilization as we know it. The researchers established the "planetary boundaries" based on these conditions.

But now we're wearing out our protective bubble. Researchers don't know what will happen as we exceed the nine boundaries, but they warn that if we maintain our current trajectory, Earth "is likely to be much less hospitable to the development of human societies."

Canada needs to follow the lead of its citizens and set an example in implementing green policies. The government should enthusiastically fund research, subsidize environmentally forward-thinking companies and technologies and create opportunities for green investment and innovation.

Give us ways to help the planet within our means, and we'll embrace them.

Stephanie Orford is a writer based in Vancouver.

metro

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SCENE 2

Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Jennifer Aniston ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Wait, Jennifer Aniston is now on Team Angelina?

Jennifer Aniston and Angelina Jolie both attended the Critics Choice Awards last week — in the same room and everything — and the world did not slip into biblical levels of chaos.

In fact, Aniston even went on record about their infamous feud that started when Brad Pitt left the Friends star and shacked up with the Unbroken director.

"I think that's slowly coming to an end, I really do," Aniston told Entertainment Tonight at the event. "(Unbroken) is so beautiful and wonderful, and she did such a gorgeous job, and I think it's time people stop with that petty B.S. and start celebrating great work and stop with the petty kind of silliness … It's just tiresome and old. It's like an old leather shoe."

OK, two things, Ms Aniston: One, some of us like old leather shoes. The thing about leather is the more broken-in it gets, the better. I have a pair, in fact, that get more comfortable each time I wear them. So maybe not the best metaphor.

And, two, while I'm all for the high-minded moving on you suggest, some of us — ahem — would be out of a job without all the petty B.S. and silliness in the world.

Black Eyed Peas

Black Eyed Peas are back! Consider yourself warned

Don't complain later that you weren't warned.

Reigning pop homogenizers the Black Eyed Peas are getting back together for another album and another tour, and there's nothing we can do about it.

"They have already started working on their new material and will be doing a tour together following the release of their first album," a source tells Radar Online.

"All of the band members are expected to return," including Fergie, will.i.am and the other two.

Sorry Billy, but gay sex *is* an 'everyday kind of thing'

Billy Crystal has a bone to pick with shows that feature scenes of a homosexual nature, complaining to the Television Critics Association that they're not "to his taste."

"Sometimes I think, 'Ah, that's too much for me.' Sometimes it's just pushing it a little too far for my taste — and I'm not going to reveal to you which ones they are."

Sure, but we can guess.

"I hope people don't abuse it and shove it in our face to the point where it feels like an everyday kind of thing," he added.

Listen, Billy, if you're going to employ neo-conservative dog whistles in your responses, the correct phrasing is "shove it down our throats," not "shove it in our faces."

And as far as gay scenes feeling like "an everyday kind of thing"? That's sort of the point.

Billy Crystal

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Panda Bear's musical talent is anything but rare

New record.
Musician's recent successes have given him the confidence to create even wilder fare

Noah Lennox's show-stealing collaboration with Daft Punk on the melancholy Doin' It Right won him more than a Grammy.

It also gave the man known as Panda Bear validation — affirmation that he apparently still needed even with scores of sterling reviews to his name since debuting as a solo artist in 2004, or as a member of oblique noise-makers Animal Collective.

"More than anything, I felt like it reinforced the idea that the stuff I was making could work and could have some power to it," Lennox said in a telephone interview from New York.

"More than anything, it gave me confidence that it resonated with those guys. It was a proof of concept."

Emboldened, Lennox has just released his grimiest and grooviest record yet in Panda Bear Meets the Grim Reaper.

Noah Lennox, a.k.a. Panda Bear
THE CANADIAN PRESS

It's generally agreed that Lennox's masterpiece was 2007's Person Pitch, a record built on his celestial vocal harmonies and a dense bedrock of found sounds. With 2011's Tomboy, he defiantly pared back and submitted to more traditional song structures.

The new record refines that approach, combining the hardest-hitting rhythms of Lennox's solo career with challenging degrees of discord.

Even when he wrote a more-or-less straightforward pop song — infectious lead single Mr. Noah — he felt compelled to add some obscuring filters.

"I feel like more songs started in that zone, more like forceful and aggressive, and in the studio got toned down a bit — or washed out, or blurred," he said.

Once again, his lyrics are more emotionally evocative than literally meaningful, but several music critics — notably in a thoughtful Pitchfork review — have sniffed out a narrative.

A father of two in his adopted hometown of Lisbon, Lennox is presumed to be writing about the weight of responsibility that comes with being a provider.

While he says no interpretation is wrong, he sounds a bit disappointed at that review.

"I really didn't want to do something where I felt like I was writing a diary or a journal or telling stories about my life," said Lennox, 36. "It was a considerable effort to not feel like I was talking about myself.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Profile

Courtney Love's big comeback

SOUND CHECK
Alan Cross
scene@metronews.ca

There's a chance you saw Courtney Love act before you heard her sing. If you think back to the opening scene of Alex Cox's Sid and Nancy in 1986, Courtney was the punk crying over Nancy's body as it was removed from the Chelsea Hotel.

For a while, Ms. Cobain straddled the worlds of acting and alt-rock. There were a few roles during the grunge years (Basquiat, 200 Cigarettes) before she scored big, starring opposite Woody Harrelson in The People vs. Larry Flynt, a performance that earned her a Golden Globe. Then came another acclaimed performance with Jim Carrey as Andy Kaufman's girlfriend in Man on the Moon. By the end of the century, Love was in danger of becoming a genuine Serious Actor.™

Alan Cross and Courtney Love
ANDREA CRAWFORD

But then things went off the rails. Far off. Drug problems, family issues, legal woes, a failed solo music career, financial difficulties and oodles of bad press saw Courtney spiral down into a pretty dark place. Now, though, her career prospects look brighter than they have at any point in this millennium. The big comeback began with a four-episode appearance in Sons of Anarchy as a schoolteacher (!) named Ms. Harrison. Then earlier this month, Courtney co-starred in an off-Broadway rock opera called Kansas City Choir Boy as part of a festival called Prototype. She played Athena, a Midwestern girl who chases her dream of being a star in New York only to end up murdered. Todd Almond, the production's composer, plays her abandoned and anguished boyfriend.

Roughly based on The Odyssey (there's even a chorus of six sirens), Almond told me "I was working on another show in Kansas City when a woman from the cast disappeared and was later found dead in New York. I kept thinking about that until it turned into Choir Boy."

So how did he land Courtney as a co-star? "My husband is Courtney's manager. He suggested it."

This past Saturday, I flew to New York for the final performance of KCCB and I can attest that it deserved all the good reviews it received. Courtney was electric. Todd Almond should be a star.

And there's more. In two weeks, we'll see Courtney in a recurring role as Elle Dallas on Empire, the record industry soap opera that's been a big hit for Fox. Her role? A bad-behaving druggy diva rock star. Courtney smiled at me. "Inspired casting, don't you think?"

TORONTO Call 311

Join the discussion about Toronto's 2015 Budget

The City of Toronto delivers over 150 different services. The Operating Budget determines which programs and services the City will offer and how much the City will raise and spend within a year. The Capital Budget & Plan provides funding for the facilities and infrastructure required to deliver those services. Staff-recommended budgets are now being considered by the Budget Committee for recommendation to the Executive Committee and City Council.

Review the proposed 2015 Budget by visiting **toronto.ca/council** or **toronto.ca/budget2015**. To participate in the 2015 Budget discussion:

1. Make a public presentation at one of the Budget Subcommittee meetings on February 2 or 3, 2015.
Register by email to buc@toronto.ca or by calling 416-392-4666 before 4 p.m. on January 30. Indicate your choice of location, date and session number. Individuals may make only one presentation at any one of the consultation sessions.

City Hall
Committee Room 1
100 Queen St. West
February 2
Session 1 – 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Session 2 – 6 p.m. onwards

Etobicoke Civic Centre
Council Chamber
399 The West Mall
February 2
Session 1 – 3 to 5 p.m.
Session 2 – 6 p.m. onwards

Scarborough Civic Centre
Council Chamber
150 Borough Drive
February 3
Session 1 – 3 to 5 p.m.
Session 2 – 6 p.m. onwards

North York Civic Centre
Council Chamber
5100 Yonge Street
February 3
Session 1 – 3 to 5 p.m.
Session 2 – 6 p.m. onwards

2. Send your written comments about the 2015 Budget to the Budget Committee.
Email: buc@toronto.ca. Fax: 416-392-1879, Attention: Budget Committee. Mail: Attention: Budget Committee, Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W., 10th floor, West Tower, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2.

3. Send a letter or email concerning the 2015 Budget to your local City Councillor.
For information on how to contact your City Councillor, please call 311, TTY: 416-338-0TTY (0889), email 311@toronto.ca or visit toronto.ca.

Notice: If you write or make a presentation to the Budget Committee, the City will collect and use your personal information in accordance with applicable laws. We also videotape meetings and make recordings publicly available on request. More information about the collection and use of your personal information is available at: http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/privacy.htm.

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EVA KIS
Metro in NYC

One of the keys to enjoying group exercise is choosing a class you feel passionate about. ISTOCK

It's a good time to make a fitness resolution, with an explosion of boutique studios offering more ways to work out than ever.

And, you may think, just as many ways to embarrass yourself with unfamiliar equipment, complicated routines and the a lack of gymnast flexibility.

Many people miss out on great fitness classes because they feel intimidated, and celebrity trainer Simone De La Rue doesn't want that to happen. In addition to clients like Anne Hathaway and Naomi Watts, the Australian also has Body By Simone studios in L.A. and Manhattan — and knows that everyone who walks through the door is a newbie in some way.

But exercising together is worth the initial hurdles: It's motivating, keeps you accountable and creates a community. "Group fitness has been around for years, and it works because you're feeding off the energy of other people," she says.

De La Rue shares how to start off on the right foot.

Get a sneak preview

Feeling intimidated is common, but you don't have to walk into a class totally unprepared.

"A lot of time people come and have a private session first to build up their confidence before they feel comfortable going into the class," says De La Rue.

Ask if the studio can offer you some one-on-one time with an instructor to preview the basic techniques and offer advice in private.

You're all there to sweat, not judge

"A lot of people even struggle looking at themselves in the mirror," says De La Rue.

The thing to remember is that you're the only one looking at you — everyone else is just as busy worrying about themselves.

So face yourself, acknowledge where you are and focus on learning the skills to build your confidence.

Discover your passion

The best class for you is the one you'll go back to.

De La Rue's passion is cardio dance: It's a link to her training as a ballerina and avoids the monotony of running and cycling.

"Dance is using your whole body and using your brain as well to work in coordination," she says. "It's creative, it's expressive, it's a joyous way of exercising."

Those words should describe how you feel doing whatever exercise you choose.

The hardest part is showing up, but if you're excited to get to it, then the rest is much easier.

Go to the right class

The newest exercise trend may not be for you, and there's always more than one kind of class to work the body parts you're concerned about.

If you're looking for cardio but are not coordinated, skip the dancing and go for the full-body class that works the same muscles.

"Pick something that's in your comfort zone to build up your strength and confidence," she says.

Marijuana

The high — minus the munchies

U.S. TV personality Bethenny Frankel could soon release her own line of marijuana that's been tweaked so that it won't give you the munchies.

The cannabis will be part of Frankel's Skinnygirl brand empire and will be available everywhere in the U.S. where recreational use of marijuana is allowed, according to US Weekly.

So far, this includes Alaska, Colorado, Oregon and Washington. Some states, like California, allow marijuana for medical purposes.

The entrepreneur had tweeted from Aspen, Colorado her delight in seeing marijuana widely available back in December.

After her 2005 appearance on The Apprentice: Martha Stewart, Frankel was selected to join the cast of The Real Housewives of New York City in 2008.

She launched Skinnygirl, a line of low-calorie cocktails, in 2011, later selling it to Fortune Brands' Beam Global.

She hosted Bethenny, her own talk show, until it was canceled in February 2014. AFP

Bethenny Frankel plans to release marijuana that won't give you munchies. JEWEL SAMAD/AFP

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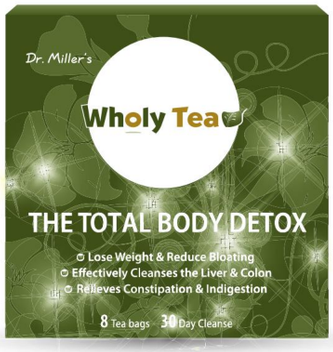

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The fewer women, the higher the chance men settle down

Study. Researchers say when women are scarce, men are more likely to seek long-term love

A man's fidelity may be dependent on the number of available women. ISTOCK

Women want to settle down while men prefer to play the field, right?

Not quite, says a study that challenges long-held views of sexual selection. It turns out the dynamics of sex are partly driven by the law of supply and demand: a man's fidelity depends to a large degree on the number of available women.

"When women are rare, men respond by desiring long-term committed relationships with a single partner," said University of Utah anthropologist and study lead author Ryan Schacht. "When women are hard to find, the best strategy is to find one and stick with her."

Men who continue skirt-chasing when competition among men is high, essentially risk losing out altogether, said Schacht: "If a man were not to live up to a woman's expectations, she has plenty other options to choose from!"

The findings, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, are based on a 16-month study of members of the 13,000-strong Makushi tribal community of hunters, fishermen and farmers in southwest Guyana.

Extended families live in villages of 160 to 750 people and premarital sex is seen as a normal part of partner-finding before settling down in a monogamous marriage.

Makushi gender relations are egalitarian, according to the study authors.

During 2010-2011, Schacht and his wife Jacque spent months building a rapport with the tribe before doing confidential interviews with 300 men and women, aged 18 to 45, in eight communities with sex ratios ranging from 90 to 140 men for every 100 women.

The Makushi were chosen because they form a homogenous group that shares a belief system and socio-economic circumstances, which meant religious and cultural differences would not colour the results.

"In general, Makushi men show a greater willingness to engage in uncommitted sex than do women, as the stereotype predicts," said Schacht.

"Men, when women were abundant, were the cads we often expect them to be. They had many sexual partners, and yet still wanted more!"

But this changed in areas where men were in the majority. "As the sex ratio became more male-biased, men's interest in short-term relationships waned," said Schacht.

Man to woman ratio

"As the sex ratio became more male-biased, men's interest in short-term relationships waned."

Ryan Schacht, lead author of 16-month study examining sexual selection

"In fact, in the communities with the most surplus men, men's and women's preferences were indistinguishable — both men and women desired long-term, committed relationships with a single partner."

Women's preference for a committed relationship did not change, the researchers found.

Why? "Short-term, uncommitted relationships are potentially costly" for women, for whom the physical and time investment in procreation, as carriers and rearers of children, is a lot bigger than for men.

The study may hold interesting social data for Asian countries where a preference for male offspring has led to a majority of men over women in certain age groups.

But the findings may not apply to all communities, said Schacht — potentially influenced by differences in culture, religion and socio-economic status.

"The global story is likely to be a bit more complicated," he said, and in patriarchal societies, for example, a gender ratio favouring men may intensify male sexual control over women. "But I think that, in general, in areas where women are largely free to choose their partners, a male-biased sex ratio increases their (women's) bargaining power in the market." AFP

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Escape Old Man Winter's freezing grasp

Tips. With spring still exactly two months away, here are some ways to survive the cold

EVA KIS
Metro in NYC

How do you keep your spirits bright through the long winter nights? We asked Dr. Harold Koenigsberg, professor of psychiatry at Mount Sinai Hospital in Manhattan and a member of the Hope for Depression Research Foundation.

Reset your body clock

The role of light is not just about getting enough vitamin D; your body clock is reset every day by the sunrise. "But when the sunrise comes later, as it does in winter, then that biological clock gets shifted in time," explains Koenigsberg.

So instead of waiting for the sun to come up, start the day early by sitting next to a bright light an hour before sunrise. This is also a good time to start that resolution about exercise — "if you can combine the two, that's best," he says. And stop drinking caffeine completely after 2 p.m. to ensure you won't have trouble falling asleep.

Get out of your own head

Sometimes, the best way to gain perspective on your own life is to help others — the feeling of altruism and social interactions are both helpful to lifting your funk. But it doesn't have to be volunteering; rekindle your interests or find like minds through social networking sites who share a new passion.

Forgive yourself

If you racked up debt over Christmas, don't ignore the bills piling up in your mailbox. Accept what's done and look for a solution.

Take mental breaks

Don't be ashamed of taking a few minutes out of your day to watch a silly cat video on YouTube. "When people get into a rut, feeling bad, it can help to have things that distract them from those thoughts," Koenigsberg says.

During those long winter nights taking mental breaks is essential. ISTOCK

Or, even better, use that break to take a lap around the office or walk up a couple of flights of stairs. Research has shown that about five minutes of movement for every hour of sitting can counter its negative health effects.

Warning signs of something more

It might be time to seek help if you feel down pretty much most of the day, every day, and it doesn't go away for a couple weeks; experience a loss of appetite, have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, and feel a lot of guilt or worthlessness.

Feeling cold

Scientists are now saying the feeling of being cold is contagious, too.

- **Observe.** Watching somebody shiver is all it takes, according to researchers at the University of Sussex in the UK, who asked their volunteers to watch videos of people putting their hands in cold water.
- **Body temperature.** Despite watching the videos in a warm, comfortable setting, the volunteers' body temperatures dropped at the sight of others undertaking intense cold. It's what the researchers call "temperature contagion" and, like other unconscious physiological changes that can occur, it's derived from human beings' communal nature. AFP

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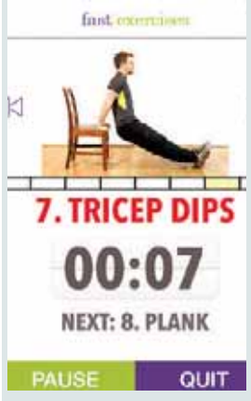

Study. Stress may keep us from empathizing with strangers

Our ability to express empathy — understanding or vicariously experiencing others' feelings — kicks into action when we get comfortable enough with the strangers in our vicinity, according to a new study.

It doesn't take much to make us comfortable. In fact, spending just 15 minutes playing a video game together or taking a stress-blocking drug could be enough to do the trick, say researchers from McGill University in Montreal.

Like other studies centered on empathy, the team used physical pain as a means to solicit the feeling on the basis that everyone understands pain and that it's easy to measure in a laboratory setting.

In this particular study, which was published in the journal Current Biology, undergraduate participants were asked to submerge their arm in ice-cold water in the presence of a friend, in the presence of a stranger and all alone.

In one scenario, the team administered a stress-blocking drug to two strangers before the experiment and in another they asked two strangers to spend 15 minutes playing the video game Rock Band before plunging their arms into icy water.

The students, who were asked to rate their pain in all scenarios, reported the most pain after enduring the icy water in the presence of a friend. "It would seem like more pain in the presence of a friend would be bad news, but it's in fact a sign that there is strong empathy between individuals — they are indeed feeling each other's pain," said senior author Jeffrey Mogil, a psychology professor at McGill.

At this point, those who were considered friends included the participants who had taken the stress-blocking drug and those who had played the video game together.

"It turns out that even a shared experience that is as superficial as playing a video game together can move people from the 'stranger zone' to the 'friend zone' and generate meaningful levels of empathy," says Dr. Mogil. "This research demonstrates that basic strategies to reduce social stress could start to move us from an empathy deficit to a surplus."

Indeed, playing Rock Band by themselves created no empathy between strangers. AFP

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Get in the game with an elegant venison dish

Theresa's tips

Secrets to cooking wild meats

NUTRI-BITES
Theresa Albert
DHN, RNCP
myfriendinfood.com

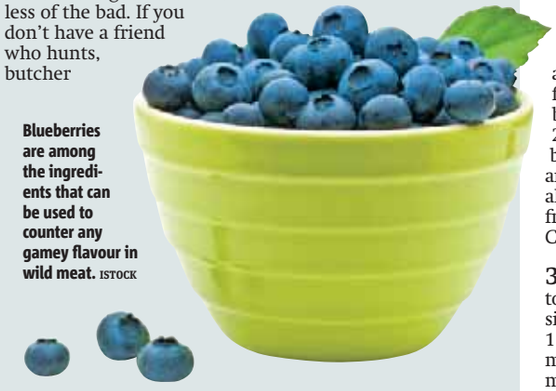
One of the key food trends this year is wild (or at least grass-fed) meats. Maybe that's due to interest in the paleo diet, or maybe it's a symptom of our collective culinary adventuring. But either way, you can't lose by broadening your horizons to include something new.

Game animals move and eat a more varied diet, which makes their meat leaner though sometimes tougher with a better fat profile. Corn-fed animals such as beef cattle tend to contain greater amounts of the more-inflammatory omega 6 and 9 fats, but grass-fed animals have more of the anti-inflammatory omega 3 fat.

That's what you want, more of the good stuff and less of the bad. If you don't have a friend who hunts, butcher shops are stocking more wild cuts and are wonderful sources of tips on how to prepare the unique proteins.

General rules include:

- beginners should chose loin cuts or rib cuts for quick-cook recipes that are more similar to traditional meats;
- game and grass-fed roasts require low and slow, moist cooking methods like braising and stewing;
- be sure your butcher has trimmed all silver skin and as much fat as possible, since game meat fat doesn't taste as good as beef fat and any "silver" is tough and virtually inedible;
- marinate to soften the texture and add flavour;
- don't be afraid to add a bit of butter or duck fat to the meat and/or sauces;
- generally, game meats require less cooking than beef;
- beat any gamey flavour with wild blueberries, juniper berries, thyme, red wine, rich broths, garlic or cream.



Blueberries are among the ingredients that can be used to counter any gamey flavour in wild meat. ISTOCK

Venison Medallions with Sautéed Apple Slices and Wild Blueberry Sauce.

Berries help create a sweet, juicy balance in this savoury dish

FLASH FOOD

From your fridge to your table in 30 minutes or less

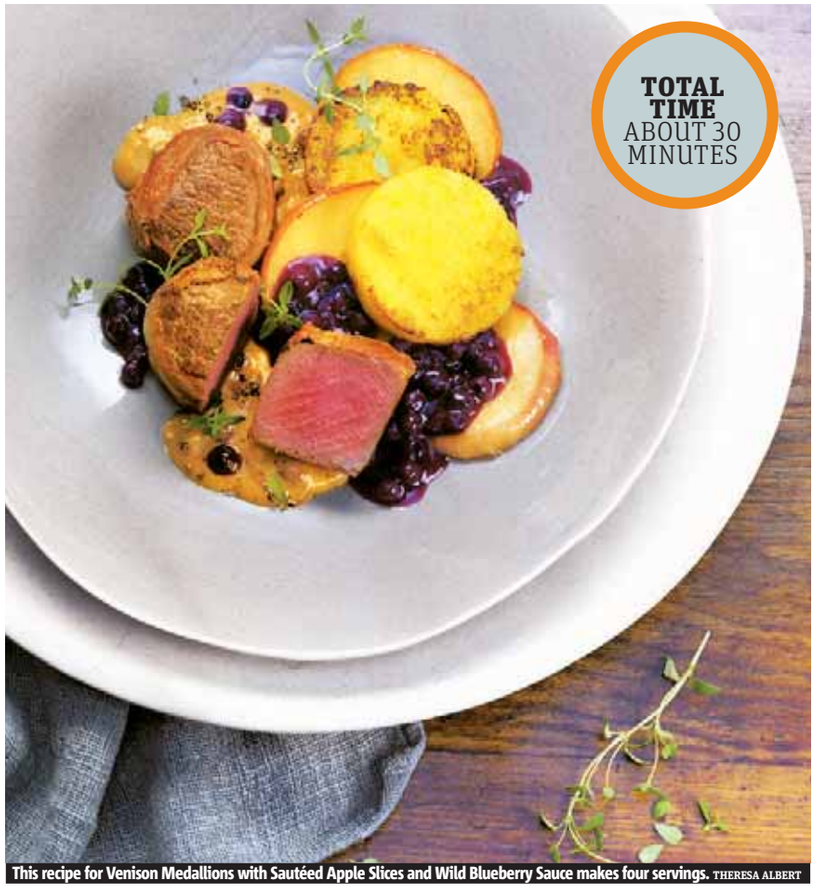
Wild blueberries offer top-notch flavour and nutrients directly from the freezer in seconds. In this recipe, they complement the flavour of venison. But they also work well with pork tenderloin. The trick is to cook the sauce separately so that the deep blue-coloured nutrients don't discolour the meat. Think of them as a way to create a juicy, sweet balance in savoury dishes.

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.

2. Sauté onions and garlic in butter, season with salt and pepper and let simmer for 5 minutes. Add wine and beef broth and simmer for 2 minutes. Add frozen wild blueberries and currant jelly and simmer, stirring occasionally for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Core and slice apples, set aside.

3. Dab venison dry on paper towel and cut into 12 equally sized, thin medallions. Heat 1 tbsp. butter in skillet. Sear medallions on all sides 3-4 minutes and season with salt and pepper.



This recipe for Venison Medallions with Sautéed Apple Slices and Wild Blueberry Sauce makes four servings. THERESA ALBERT

4. Remove medallions from pan and place in oven until sauce is finished. Add apples to pan with a splash of water or wine if needed.

5. Serve venison medallions with apple slices and wild blueberry sauce. Garnish with fresh thyme leaves.

Ingredients

- 1/2 onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. butter
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup (240 ml) red wine
- 1 cup (240 ml) rich beef broth
- 3/4 cup (100 g) frozen wild blueberries
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) currant jelly
- 2 red apples
- 1 1/2 lbs (600 g) saddle of venison (or pork tenderloin)
- 1/2 bunch of thyme

RECIPE PROVIDED BY THE WILD BLUEBERRY ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA AT WILDBLUEBERRIES.COM, AND ADAPTED BY THERESA ALBERT.

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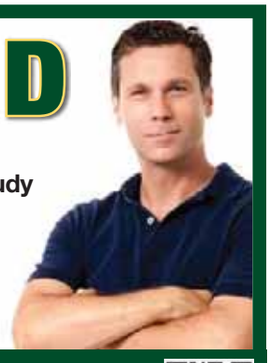

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A combo of contacts for career success

Career. Tips on nabbing your ideal professional network

LAUREN MARINIGH
TalentEgg.ca

Oh, the places this tablet could take you! ISTOCK

Creating a LinkedIn profile is easy — knowing who to add and how to build your network and connections is the hard part.

Building an ideal network on LinkedIn takes time, persistence and patience. But once you have created a great network of contacts, you'll find LinkedIn is one of your most valuable social media platforms and a great resource.

So where do you start? Here are some tips.

Who to add

Knowing who to add is the most important thing to consider when building any network, but especially on a social platform like LinkedIn.

Keep in mind that LinkedIn is a professional hub, and your connections are a representation of you. Only connect with people you feel will represent you well and that you would be happy for possible employers to see as connections on your profile.

If you are going to reach out to professionals you don't personally know, make sure that you include a message with your invitation, so they understand why you are adding them, and how you may want to network.

Avoid adding people who have no significant value to you or your network. These people may be those that aren't in your field, friends you haven't kept in touch with, and of course, people that you don't know or trust.

Always make sure that you skim the profile of each possible new connection, as this is a way to validate who they are, and why they are relevant to you.

What employers are looking for

Employers often first look for mutual connections, and how you link back to them personally. It sparks a common ground when an employer notices you have a connection in common.

This could also be negative if the connection in common isn't someone who has the best reputation with the employer or human resources manager looking up your profile.

Employers also want to see that you have worked to build your network. Profiles that only have minimal connections or no connections at all can raise a red flag.

If you are going to be on LinkedIn, commit yourself to building your network, and keeping your profile updated, otherwise it's almost better to stay off of it.

Not sure how to build your network or don't know very many people on LinkedIn? Start with creating a great profile, sharing regular content, and getting involved in LinkedIn groups and company pages.

You'll notice your network will slowly begin to grow. And hey, don't forget to add all your colleagues from past jobs, or classmates and teachers from college or university.

Who to remove

LinkedIn is a professional network in comparison to Facebook. Who you connect with on LinkedIn is probably not necessarily who you connect with on Facebook and vice versa. Keep LinkedIn your professional network, and don't be afraid to remove those connections you may not want to be associated with anymore.

- Remove those that you haven't stayed in touch with enough to know what they are doing professionally. Remove those who are inactive and haven't updated their profiles in a long time, and people that may have switched career paths and no longer seem to be relevant to your network or career.

The important thing to remember is that you can't worry about people being offended if you remove them. LinkedIn is a virtual resumé, and if your connections aren't adding value to your profile, there really is no point being connected.

- Once you have a good LinkedIn network, you'll start reaping the rewards of networking within your industry. LinkedIn is a great resource for anyone, but especially for new grads with minimal experience and limited industry connections. LinkedIn can be your go-to site for finding jobs and building your professional reputation and network.

Advice

A business fib that's about to bite back

OFFICE SPACE
Eleni Deacon
life@metronews.ca

Dear Metro,
So I lied on my resumé about having software skills I don't really have. It was quick decision that I didn't think would backfire, but now I'm in trouble. My boss wants me to lead a project that relies heavily on a computer program I can't actually use. How do I get out of this without seeming like a phony?
— Adobe Dummy

Dear AD,
A little light embellishment can pep up a ho-hum CV. But when your resumé is more padded than a mattress wearing a life jacket, you risk drowning in your own dishonesty.

If the software in question is widely used, consider taking an online course. One weekend of practice could get your skills to a passable — read: pretend-able — level. More niche programs will be trickier to learn. Call up old colleagues and ask for a crash course, or scour your office supply closet for a manual you can dust off and study.

No way to wing it? Weigh fessing up vs. flunking your task. Do bad work, and your boss will be irked. But confessing could cost you your job. If possible, downplay your knowledge: emphasize that you're more novice than expert, explaining that your skills might be rusty.

And next time you update your resumé, enhance the abstracts — not the hard facts.

Dear Metro,
I really don't click with one of my co-workers. There's no particular reason for the tension — we just don't get along. For the most part, we ignore each other. But I'm starting to worry that my obvious irritation is making me seem like a bad team player. How can I stay professional when I can't stand one of my colleagues?
— Lose My Feud

Dear LMF,
It's understandable — and even inevitable — that one of your workmates will make you berserk. Less acceptable: dealing with it like a jerk. Unless you're employed as a TV mean girl, the silent treatment is not a socially acceptable conflict management technique. Think of this relationship as an investment in your career. Your co-worker may drive you up the wall, but your attitude could be driving down your value as an employee.

Playing nice — or at least faking nice — will show your colleague, as well as the rest of your office, that you prioritize good vibes. And who knows: a bit of phony small talk may spawn a genuine rapport. You have nothing to gain from maintaining this grudge except your own sense of stubborn superiority. To succeed in the real-world workforce, ditch the teen-movie theatrics.

ELENI DEACON IS A TORONTO-BASED WRITER WHO HAS SEEN IT ALL AS AN EAGER EMPLOYEE OF BIG OFFICES, SMALL OFFICES, HOME OFFICES AND ONE ITALIAN RESTAURANT.

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metro
COLD & FLU
Tuesday, January 20, 2015

There are plenty of myths surrounding the common cold and the flu. Don't get caught up with these falsehoods as you enjoy the winter. SHUTTERSTOCK

Fighting pesky cold and flu myths

Viruses. Can a bad cold turn into the flu? Should you feed a cold or starve a fever? Answers below

JACLYN TERSIGNI
For Metro

The flu and colds may be the hottest topics around the water cooler this time of year, but a lot of what is being said is not always factual.

Here are some popular beliefs about the viruses and the truth behind them.

Feed a cold, starve a fever
False. You may find you have less of an appetite when you are sick with a common cold or with the flu, but proper nutrition is important and hydration is key.

"I'm not sure where that came from, but it is a myth," said Dr. Mary Vearncombe, medical director of infection prevention and control at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. "Hydration is really important to treat influenza and many other infectious illnesses. You really do need to keep your hydration levels up."

You can catch the flu from receiving the vaccination
False. "That's a common one and it's not true," said Dr. Irene Armstrong, associate medical officer of health at Toronto Public Health. "There are two different kinds of flu vaccinations that we give. Most people get the injection, which is made from pieces of the deadened virus."

You can catch the flu from going out in the cold without a coat
False. "You catch the flu from someone who has the flu. You don't get it through the air, it's not airborne," Vearncombe said. "Flu circulates during the winter, when people are going out in the cold. People make that association. But association is not causation. You have to have direct or indirect contact with someone who is sick."

You can treat the flu with antibiotics
False. The flu is a viral infection, not a bacterial one. Over-the-counter products can help lessen symptoms and antiviral products may help with the length of the sickness.

"You can treat the flu with antiviral agents. There are a couple on the market available through prescription," Vearncombe said. "The results of using those antivirals are not dramatic. You can reduce the number of days you're sick by a day or so."

A bad cold can turn into the flu
False. "Colds and the flu are two completely different viral illnesses," Vearncombe said. But "the symptoms for cold and flu overlap quite a bit. Colds tend to be less severe, influenza tends to be more severe, but there is a lot of middle ground. The common cold virus — rhinovirus — cannot transform or mutate into influenza."

Drinking plenty of water can help ward off a virus. SHUTTERSTOCK

Be proactive. Some simple steps to prevent catching a virus this winter

Power up with these cold- and flu-fighting tips:

Take vitamin C
A daily dose of vitamin C may be extra beneficial for people who struggle eating fruits and vegetables. And while research is inconclusive, it is believed to help power against the flu and colds.

Drink plenty of water
According to Dr. Kim Foster, a Victoria, B.C.-based family doctor, dehydration can dry out mucus membranes (which are a big defender against viruses) in the nose and mouth.

Think zinc
When the early signs of a cold strike, consider taking zinc, Foster said. Evidence has shown that zinc can reduce the severity and duration of cold symptoms, benefiting even youngsters.

Humidify
Research from the Harvard School of Public Health suggests that humidifying the home can help kill the flu virus. The reason? The flu virus is believed to flourish in low-humidity areas. Therefore, by raising humidity levels, its survival can be drastically reduced.

Keep moving
During the winter months, children tend to be indoors more, which often leads to more sedentary lifestyles. Exercise is believed to be a natural immune-system booster, so find indoor activities, such as swimming, gymnastics or indoor sports, in which to enrol youngsters.

TANYA ENBERG/FOR METRO

When a shot just isn't enough

Canadians are getting hit hard with the flu bug this year, and the current vaccine isn't well-matched to fight it.

Each year, manufacturers create a new vaccine for the coming flu season based on predictions from the World Health Organization on which strains are expected to be circulating the following year. That's why the flu vaccine varies in effectiveness from year to year — anywhere from 10 to 90 per cent.

Last year, WHO determined there hadn't been any major changes to influenza viruses around the world, so there weren't any major adjustments to the vaccine.

But a prediction is just that — a prediction.

"The flu vaccine is a very tricky virus," said Dr. Vinita Dubey, associate medical officer of health with the Toronto Public Health's division of communicable diseases. "It has the ability to constantly change itself, and as it changes itself, it makes itself more virulent."

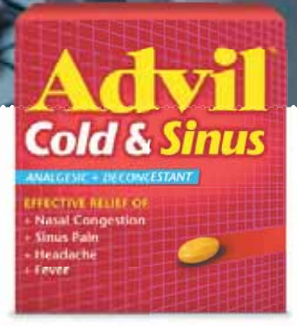
In the first week of this year's flu season, seven of 13 provinces and territories reported widespread activity — the highest levels to date, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

But in early reports from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this year's flu shot is only 23 per cent effective (and could be even less so in Canada).

That's because the most common strain that's circulating this season in North America is H3N2, which isn't well-matched with the current vaccine.

"The reason why it's so complicated is because the flu virus itself is so complicated," Dubey said. "That's why it makes it so difficult to predict which strain and which type of flu virus will be circulating. Sometimes what goes into making the decision for next year isn't always accurate."

VAWN HIMMELSBACH/FOR METRO



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Power your immune system

Nutrition. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables in various colours, plus fish, nuts and seeds

TANYA ENBERG
For Metro

Dark, leafy greens, such as spinach and kale, are rich in vitamin C, as well as other antioxidants, and folate, which can assist with repairing DNA and fuel new cell development. SHUTTERSTOCK IMAGES

Sweet potatoes help ward off the winter cold because they contain beta carotene, which is converted into vitamin A in the body, helping defend against bacteria, viruses, and germs that can cause illness.

Even though cold and flu viruses seem to be all around us during the winter, you can help aid in the fight against unwanted germs by choosing the right foods.

But is there really such a thing as cold and flu-fighting super foods?

Absolutely, experts say.

"A well-balanced diet is really important," said Sarah Remmer, a Calgary-based registered dietician and nutritionist.

"Having a nice balance of macronutrients — protein, carbohydrates, and fats — as well as micronutrients — vitamins and minerals — coming from different food groups is key to growth, development and immunity in kids, as well as staying healthy, maintaining a healthy weight, keeping immune systems strong and staying energized in adulthood."

When scanning the fridge for something to eat, some items simply pack more nutritional punch than others.

"I would say that it's important to still reach for at least three to five colours of fruits and vegetables every day at minimum," Remmer said.

"Include healthy sources of fat, such as omega-3 rich fish — an immune-boosting food — as well as nuts and seeds that contain B vitamins, such as niacin, as well as the antioxidant vitamin E, both of which protect your immune system."

According to Dr. David White, associate professor of family and community medicine at the University of Toronto, when bolstering the odds against catching a cold or flu, simplicity reigns.

"It really is the basics," White said. "Good nutrition, fresh fruit and vegetables, and enough sleep."

This can easily translate into nutritious, well-balanced meals that don't require major prep time.

"Quick and simple meals can still be healthful and immune boosting — they don't have to be gourmet," Remmer said.

"For example, consider having oatmeal, Greek yogurt and berries for dinner if time is tight. Or making tuna melts using canned tuna fish, tomato slices and sprinkled cheese on whole grain bread, with vegetable soup."

Reach for flu-busting super foods

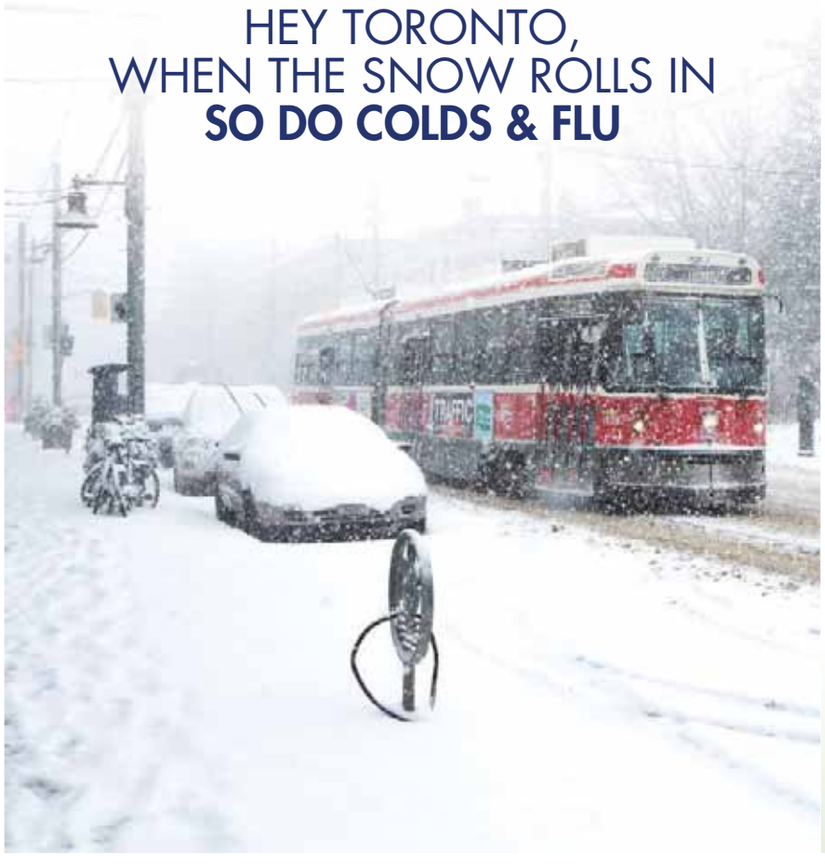
Yogurt is known for containing beneficial probiotics that aid in the digestive track, but there is also research indicating that probiotics help in the prevention of colds and flus.

Do you fear garlic breath? Get over it and get crushing these flavour-enhancing bulbs. Allicin, an active component of garlic, is considered an immune-boosting powerhouse for blocking unwanted, infection-causing enzymes.

Consider adding salmon, trout, halibut, or tuna to the menu. These oily fish selections aid in strengthening the immune system by increasing the activity of phagocytes, the white blood cells that combat harmful bacteria, said Sarah Remmer, a registered dietician and nutritionist.

TANYA ENBERG/FOR METRO

HEY TORONTO,
WHEN THE SNOW ROLLS IN
SO DO COLDS & FLU



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4 SPORTS

Moguls

Canadian men sweep podium

Mikael Kingsbury led a Canadian podium sweep in the men's dual moguls at the freestyle world championships on Monday.

Kingsbury, from Deux-Montagnes, Que., defeated Philippe Marquis of Quebec City 20-15 in the men's final for his first world dual moguls gold. Marc-Antoine Gagnon of Terrebonne, Que., completed the Canadian sweep of medals by finishing third.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alpine skiing

Vonn breaks World Cup wins record

Lindsey Vonn won a super-G Monday for her record 63rd World Cup victory and celebrated with an embrace from a surprise visitor — boyfriend Tiger Woods.

The American broke Annemarie Moser-Proell's 35-year-old record of 62 World Cup wins with a flawless run down the Olympia delle Tofane course, finishing by a huge 0.85 ahead of Anna Fenninger of Austria.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Australian Open

Bouchard breezes into second round

Eugenie Bouchard powered into the second round of the Australian Open on Monday as the seventh-seeded Canadian star defeated German Anna-Lena Friedsam 6-2, 6-4.

The Genie Army of fans, which came together informally at the event a year ago, was back out in force, cheering throughout the 78-minute match.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto FC

"We have never gotten a player, that I can remember, from a top team in a top league who's willing to come over aged 27. It just hasn't happened yet."

Toronto FC GM Tim Bezbatchenko told a news conference Monday that the signing of five-foot-four Italian playmaker Sebastian Giovinco from Juventus has raised the bar for MLS.

David Clarkson and the Maple Leafs mustered just one goal against the Hurricanes and goalie Anton Khudobin on Monday night at the Air Canada Centre.

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canes blow past Buds

NHL. Leafs fall to 1-6-0 since coaching change

In Toronto

Hurricanes	Maple Leafs
4	1

Going on the road to face the defending Stanley Cup champions and three Western Conference playoff teams may have been too difficult a test for the Toronto Maple Leafs early in the tenure of interim coach Peter Horachek.

But after dropping those four games, the Maple Leafs came home to Air Canada Centre and looked no better for the experience, losing 4-1 to the lowly Carolina Hurricanes on Monday night.

Nazem Kadri ended Toronto's goal drought at 162 minutes and 14 seconds, but the Leafs were still dominated for much of the game. They've lost five in a row and are 1-6-0 under Horachek.

The Hurricanes (16-25-5) controlled play against the Leafs on Monday night, chasing starting goaltender Jonathan Bernier (three goals on 13 shots) in the process. Brad Malone, Brett Bellemore and Eric Staal scored for Carolina, and Staal added an empty-netter.

Carolina goaltender Anton Khudobin made 34 saves for the victory. The Hurricanes improved to 6-2-1 since the calendar turned to 2015.

The Leafs have one more game before the all-star break, Wednesday night at the Ottawa Senators.

Coming off a four-game Western Conference road trip, the Leafs needed a few shifts to get their legs under them. It didn't help that the crowd of 18,979 was quiet-car silent for much of the night.

Late in the second period, another Leafs fan showed frustration by throwing a jersey onto the ice. Another came down in the third.

The jersey-throwing has become something of a disturbing trend during a season that has gone the wrong way quickly.

Kadri snapped the Leafs' drought 14:11 into the third period. His power-play goal also ended the Hurricanes' run of consecutive penalties killed at 36 over 14-plus games.

That goal sparked something, but the Leafs couldn't beat Khudobin again.

Eric Staal fired a slap shot into an empty net with 1:34 left to seal it.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Kyle Lowry led Raptors scorers with 18 points on Monday night.

DARREN HAUCK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Raps use balanced attack to beat Bucks

In Milwaukee

Raptors	Bucks
92	89

Kyle Lowry scored 18 points and was one of six Toronto players to reach double figures in the Raptors' 92-89 road victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Monday night.

Terrence Ross added 16 points as the Atlantic Division leaders (27-14) won for just the third time in 10 games. Ross did not start for only the second time in the last 104 games after he was held scoreless for the only time this season in a 95-93 loss against New Orleans on Sunday.

Milwaukee (21-20), playing for the first time since beating New York 95-79 on Thursday in London, got 20 points, five rebounds, five assists and four steals from Brandon Knight.

The Bucks, whose biggest loss this season was 124-82 at Toronto on Nov. 21, also got 14 points from Ersan Ilyasova and 13 from O.J. Mayo. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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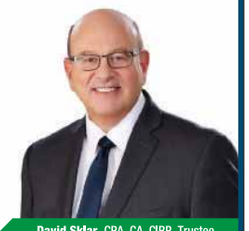

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AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

metro AR

→ See the full instructions on Metro's Voices page.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You have started many new things in recent weeks and now you want to see some results.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You may be intensely ambitious but don't expect too much too soon. A step at a time will get you where you need to go.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
So many of the things you have been worrying about will fade away over the next few days. It's doubtful whether they existed in the first place but the important thing is you feel free at last.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
The planets indicate if you work hard now you will make a name for yourself and make a handsome profit before the end of the month.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
There is no point trying to keep secrets from loved ones because they know you too well and can sense when you are trying to hide something.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
The Sun moves from one of the more serious areas of your chart today but that doesn't mean you can't have fun. You will, however, have to focus more on work and health issues.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You can change a number of things over the next few days but if you really want a better day-to-day experience you must change your attitude.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Put other people's needs first today and tomorrow, because if you do a favour for partners and loved ones now they will do no end of favours for you.

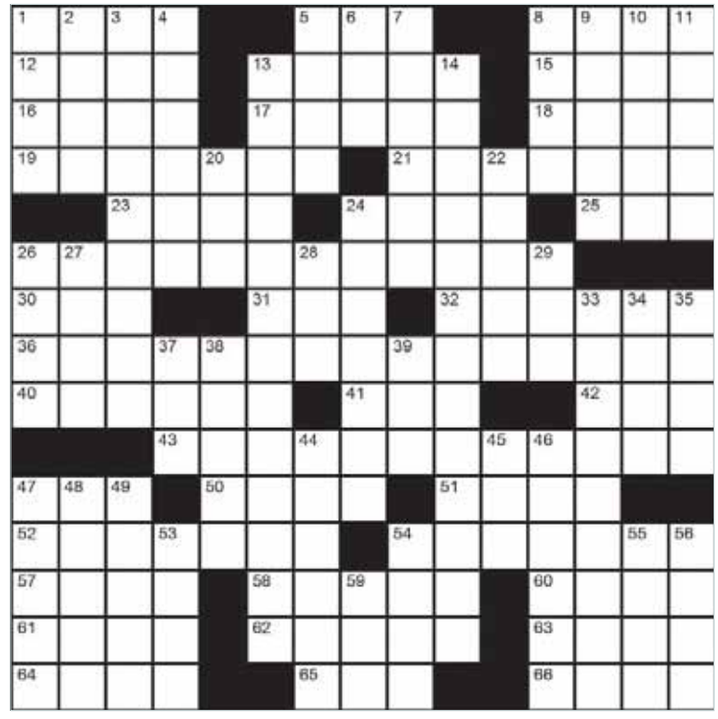
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
This is a good time for traveling and having fun with your friends. Don't worry if you are a bit short of cash because you will meet up with someone who enjoys buying you things.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Your head is full of good ideas and some of them may even be great but now you need to get your act together and decide which should be followed up on.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
A little bit of effort will go a long way over the next 24 hours. All things are possible if you desire them enough.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You will be in a thoughtful mood today and that's good because the more you think about certain issues now the more likely it is they will work out for you later.

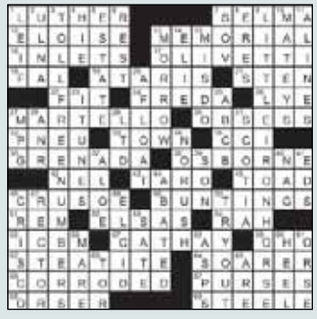
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Medieval chest
5. Dickens character
8. Pining
12. #13-Down ingr.
13. Songstress Ms. Black
15. Island of Indonesia
16. Test product
17. "I shall never see _ __ lovely as..." - Joyce Kilmer
18. Ottawa Senators Right Wing Mr. Condra
19. Pertaining to goats
21. Microsoft game console: 2 wds.
23. How music might be released: wd. + acr.
24. Person departing
25. Mr. Knight
26. 1847: M-H = __-__ (Agricultural machinery manufacturer founded in Newcastle, ON)
30. 'Meth' suffix
31. Low: French
32. High IQ society member
36. __ __ of Canada (Art program maintained by Library and Archives that depicts historic Canucks): 2 wds.
40. Lippy one
41. Time off letters
42. Jogged
43. Steven Blaney = Canada's Minister of __ __
47. Eggs, scientifically
50. US Attorney General Mr. Holder
51. Musical instrument
52. "Star Trek" alien
54. Light bulb type
57. Applaud
58. Tibet's neighbour
60. Mother: French
61. Hertz rival
62. Dentist's feared tool
63. European erupter
64. Movie company
65. Fixed
66. Canadian rebel Louis

Down
1. 'High Voltage' band
2. Ms. Perlman
3. Oscar Peterson and Glenn Gould, at times
4. Fallen-to-forest-floors findings
5. Tube
6. UN workers' gr.
7. Reflex-testing hammer
8. Wild goat
9. Futuristic card
10. "Crazy" songstress Patsy
11. Boosted
13. Coffee Crisp, for one: 3 wds.
14. Actress from London, ON who stars as Amy Fleming on CBC's "Heartland": 2 wds.
20. Beverage brrrr-er
22. Oxford University college
24. __ bypass surgery
26. Driving directions drawings
27. Buffalo type
28. Yes, in Japan
29. Prog. on Mike Myers' resume
33. Ecosystem of Tanzania famous for the land migration of wildlife
34. Smell _ __ (Be suspicious)
35. Central Park locale: acr. + acr.
37. Meal-making measurement, mini-ly
38. J.R.R. Tolkien = John Ronald __ Tolkien
39. Health supplements store
44. Ocean crossers
45. Certain ISP
46. Liza __ (Kitchener, ON born host of Global's "The Morning Show")
47. Killer whales
48. Car company
49. At full force, poetically
53. __-daisy!
54. Cease
55. Coastal bird, variantly
56. Actress Patricia
59. "American __" (1999)

Yesterday's Crossword

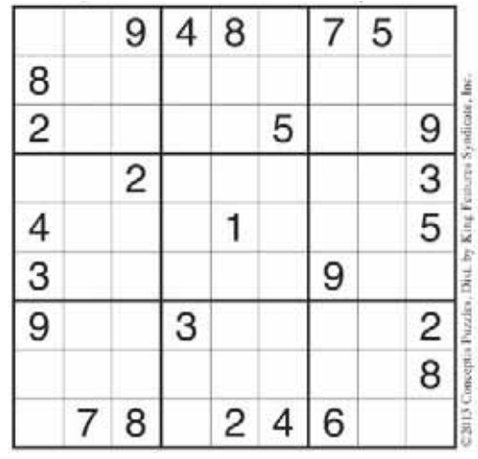


Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.



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Yesterday's Sudoku

5	3	2	9	8	1	7	4	6
7	9	1	2	4	6	3	5	8
4	8	6	5	7	3	2	1	9
1	2	8	4	5	9	6	7	3
6	5	3	1	2	7	9	8	4
9	4	7	6	3	8	1	2	5
2	6	9	8	1	5	4	3	7
8	7	4	3	9	2	5	6	1
3	1	5	7	6	4	8	9	2

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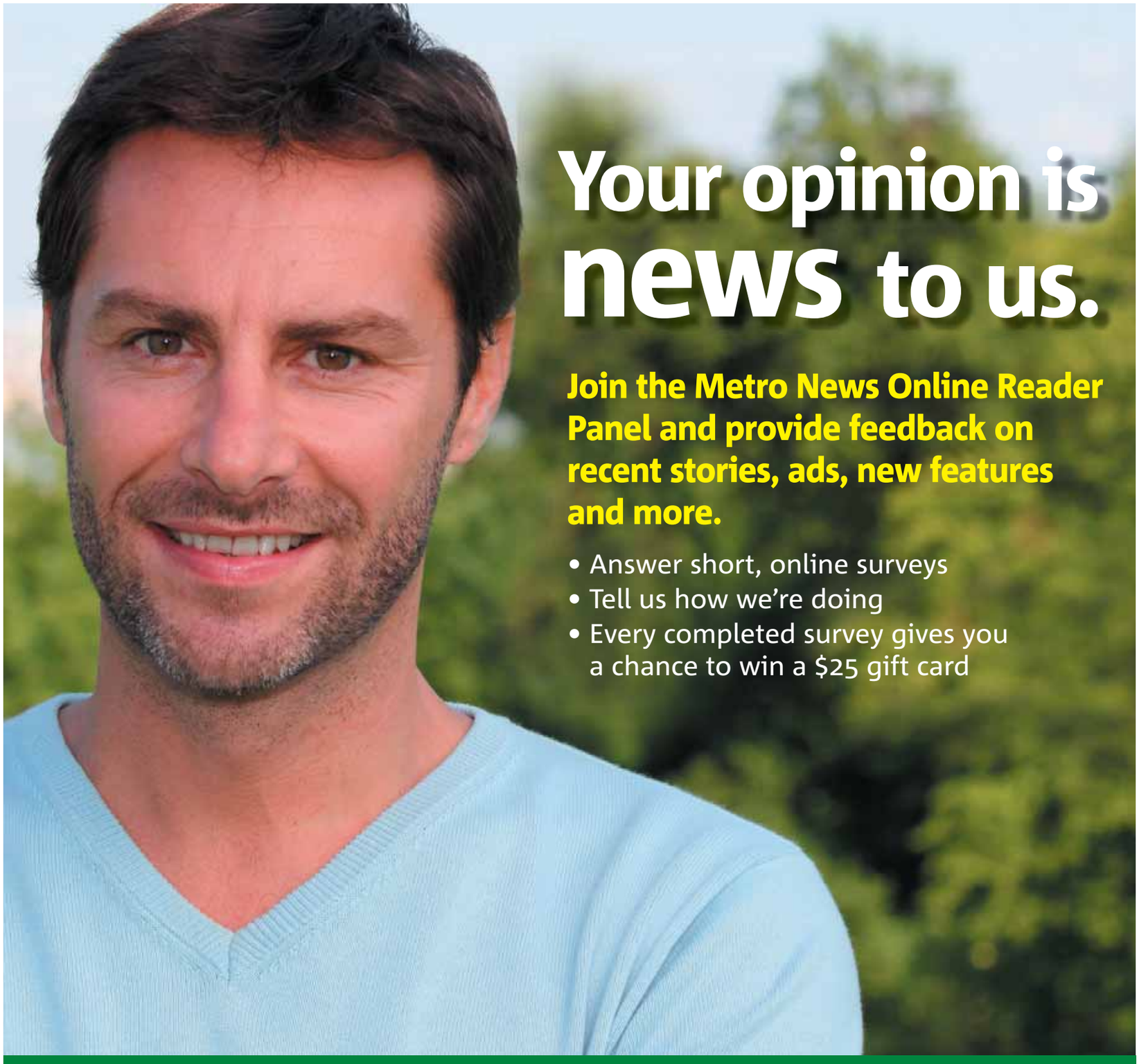
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